



"that guilt shall not escape, nor innocence suffer"

MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 27, 2007

CONTACT: JENNIFER JOHNSON
615.744.4087 (OFFICE)
1.888.226.4454 (PAGER)

SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT EMPLOYEES SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON

Columbia, TN - Two former employees of the Mount Pleasant sewage treatment plant will spend time behind bars for falsifying test results.

James Michael Holden and James Larry Holden were both sentenced in federal court last week. Michael Holden received a 32 month sentence followed by 9 months to be spent in a half way house. His father, Larry Holden, was sentenced to 24 months in federal prison followed by 9 months in a half way house. Larry Holden was the Director of the Department of Public Works in Mount Pleasant, and Michael Holden was the licensed operator of the sewage treatment plant.

The two were accused of submitting false reports to the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. Those reports indicated that the plant was performing water-quality tests required by the Federal Clean Water Act however the investigation revealed that those tests were not being performed. During the course of the investigation, agents also discovered that, once the false reports were identified, the Holdens tried to cover up the crime with additional false reporting.

TDEC Deputy Commissioner Paul Sloan says these kinds of actions threaten public safety, "Falsifying documents impacts the integrity of our entire environmental regulatory system. Those who are willing to knowingly jeopardize water quality threaten not only the environment itself but also the health of the people who live in their communities."

TBI Director Mark Gwyn hopes the stiff sentences handed down in this case serve as a warning to other plant operators who may be cutting corners illegally, "Tennesseans deserve to have the peace of mind that comes from knowing our water quality is being protected. The TBI is going to actively pursue anyone who jeopardizes that right." As a part of their sentence, the Holden's will be permanently barred from working at any job in the environmental field.

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